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ABSTRACT

The philosophy and programs presented are designed to assist New Jersey educators in planning and developing vocational education for the handicapped. An important measure of the success of such education, the handicapped person's ability to get and hold a job, is described. Federal legislation providing for more training for the handicapped is briefly outlined. Twelve categories of handicapped persons are used for educational classification and are defined here: mentally retarded educable, mentally retarded trainable, neurologically impaired, perceptually impaired, emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted, visually handicapped, auditorily handicapped, communication handicapped, orthopedically handicapped, chronically ill, and multiply handicapped. The recommended team approach to long-term vocational development involving education and counseling is outlined. Five major phases (each described in detail) of the vocational preparation of the handicapped form a strategy which has often proven effective: (1) vocational evaluation, (2) self and career awareness, (3) skill training, (4) getting started in a real job, and (5) followup. The sequence of programs developed for the handicapped (elementary through high school level and older) includes technology for children, introduction to vocations, employment orientation, work experience and career exploration program, and part-time cooperative employment orientation. (Author/MS)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Vocational Education for the Handicapped; Assistance in Initiating or Strengthening Vocational Programs for Handicapped Youth.

SPECIAL PAPER
SEPTEMBER 1974

by
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Bureau of Occupational Research Development **Division of Vocational Education**

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The 1968 Amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963, which required 10% of the monies granted through Section B of the Act to be expended on programs for the handicapped, stimulated great interest amongst educators.

New Jersey's current commitment to the vocational education of the handicapped is a matter of record. In FY 1972 New Jersey spent 6.02% of its total of federal, state and local vocational funds for the handicapped. The national average was 2.49%. New Jersey ranked third among the states in this percentage spent for the handicapped.

The following material has been prepared to assist you in your discussion concerning the initiation or strengthening of vocational or occupational programs for handicapped youth.

1. THE REAL TEST OF THE EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED

A handicapped person's ability to get and hold a job is an important measure of the successfulness of his or her education.

The best way for the school and its personnel to achieve the goal of employability is to help the handicapped student acquire those academic skills that are common to all job areas. In addition, the handicapped students should be helped to acquire the background of general information and skills necessary in specific vocational areas as well as the knowledge and the techniques of getting and holding jobs which are open to them.

The development of realistic career goals for the handicapped in our society offers a challenge to the vocational educator chiefly at the secondary level since in New Jersey, for the 1973-74 school year, very few handicapped persons out of a total secondary population continued in some type of post-secondary training.

A critical need of the handicapped is for training which will give them a marketable skill upon leaving the educational system whether after grade 11, 12, 13, or 14. In providing services to meet these needs, many innovative and imaginative approaches have been developed which attempt to provide answers to the problems, but it is either secondary or post-secondary vocational education that can be expected to provide the most adequate solution.

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2. FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOR MORE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE HANDICAPPED

The handicapped group represents a significantly large portion of the total population but it is as varied in characteristics as the general public. The Vocational Amendments of 1968 defined the handicapped as "mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled or other health impaired persons who by reason thereof require special education and related services." However, such labels should not be confused with defining the type of educational program needed by a handicapped person. The type of handicap involved is but one of many factors important for the assessment of the person by trained personnel who develop an educational prescription to meet that individual's specific needs.

The 1968 and now 1972 amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963 focused attention on the problems facing the handicapped. It was the intent of the Congress of the United States to act on this problem by mandating that 10% of the federal funds under Part B of the Act be allocated to provide vocational education for the handicapped.

As state and local vocational educators move to implement programs and services, they require (1) reliable information about the handicapped and (2) participation from people with expertise to offer practical suggestions and assistance in implementing meaningful programs and services.

3. WHO ARE THEY?

Who are the handicapped persons?[1] Handicapped pupils are formally identified by child study teams in the local educational agencies.

Once a child with learning handicaps is identified and diagnosed by the local child study team, he/she is then classified, if necessary, into one of the following categories established by the State of New Jersey:

Mentally Retarded Educable—that child whose capacities for abstract thinking are limited to a low level; he also gives evidence of less ability to function socially without direction than that displayed by his intellectually average peers.

Mentally Retarded Trainable—that child who is unable to function socially without close and direct supervision, but is able to respond to very simple stimulus-response learning experiences.

Neurologically Impaired—that child whose central nervous system shows a specific and definable disorder upon neurological examination.

Perceptually Impaired—that child who exhibits a learning disability in one or more of the perceptual areas involved in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. This disability must have a perceptual etiology and not primarily due to sensory disorders, motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage.

Emotionally Disturbed—that child whose pattern of behavior is characterized by an inappropriate pattern of functioning which severely limits the child from profiting from regular classroom learning experiences. The emotionally disturbed child experiences difficulty in the area of interpersonal relationships, and often expresses emotion inappropriate to the situation, in matter of degree and quality.

Socially Maladjusted—that child whose pattern of interaction is characterized by conflicts which he cannot resolve adequately without the assistance of authority figures. He exhibits his maladjustment chiefly in his persistent inability to abide by the rules and regulations of a social structure.

Visually Handicapped—that child whose visual acuity with correction is 20/70 or poorer, or who, as a result of some other factors involved in visual functioning, cannot function in a learning environment without a special education program. A child, whose visual acuity with correction is 20/200 or poorer in the better eye and requires a knowledge and skill in the use of Braille, is legally "blind."

Auditorily Handicapped—the deaf or hard of hearing:

A) Deaf—that child whose residual hearing is not sufficient to enable him to understand speech and develop language successfully, even with a hearing aid.

B) Hard of hearing—that child whose sense of hearing although defective, is functional, with or without a hearing aid but whose hearing loss renders him unable to make full use of regular school experiences without special education.

Communication Handicapped—that child whose native speech is severely impaired to the extent that it seriously interferes with his ability to use oral language to communicate, and this disability is not due primarily to a hearing impairment.

Orthopedically Handicapped—that child who, because of malformation, malfunction, or loss of bones, muscle or body tissue, needs a special educational program, special equipment or special facilities to permit normal learning processes to function.

Chronically Ill—that child who, because of illness such as tuberculosis, epilepsy, cardiac condition, leukemia, asthma, malnutrition, pregnancy, or other physical disabilities which are otherwise uncategorized, but make it impractical for the child to receive adequate instruction through the regular school program.

Multiply Handicapped—that child who exhibits handicaps in any two or more categories. These handicaps shall be independent of one another and shall be identified as primary and secondary for classification purposes.

[1] *Bureau Briefs*, Vo. 5, November, 1973, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Branch of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, New Jersey State Department of Education.

STANDARD RECOMMENDED

The Branch of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, State Department of Education supports the position that vocational or occupational programs should be conducted in such a way that (1) interactions with non-handicapped students are maximized, (2) handicapped students will benefit from a broad and rich curriculum, including participation in varsity sports and the full range of student activities, and (3) distinctions between handicapped and non-handicapped are minimized.

4. A TEAM APPROACH TO LONG-TERM VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the development of a vocational program for the handicapped child, the services of vocational guidance and counseling are necessary because the task of the educator is not merely to train the handicapped vocationally, but socially as well.

Career or vocational development should start for the handicapped as soon as possible in the educational process. A program of career awareness should begin the process. Occupational awareness should follow. Next comes skill training. Then comes placement. Then comes follow-up. Then, eventually, comes retraining or additional training. Throughout this educational sequence, career guidance and counseling is necessary.

We should never lose sight of the broad needs of the handicapped, such as basic academic skills, personal social skills, communication skills, and skills relating to orientation to work. To develop a program which encompasses all of these elements, cooperation is needed between the vocational educator and special education personnel.

In providing for helpful vocational programs for the handicapped, these four norms should be observed:

1. The program prescribed for a particular youth should be open-ended, and should allow for as much continuing growth as possible.
2. When possible the handicapped youth should be allowed to "drop into" programs for the normal youngster.
3. Parent involvement is very important not only in the secondary vocational phase but throughout the handicapped youngster's educational experience.
4. *Realistic* and flexible vocational programs should be designed for the handicapped.

The need for the development of positive work habits and attitudes to accompany the development of skill training for the handicapped cannot be overemphasized. In too many cases, the handicapped cannot retain a position because of their behavior or lack of knowledge in relating to fellow workers, not because they do not possess the skills to do the job. If one area is to be stressed beyond all others in the entire process of educating the handicapped person vocationally, it should be the development of positive personal characteristics.

5. AN EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EMPLOYABILITY THAT REALLY WORKS

Five major phases of the vocational preparation of the handicapped form a strategy which has proven effective: (1) Vocational Evaluation; (2) Self and Career Awareness; (3) Skill Training; (4) Getting Started in a Real Job; and (5) Follow-up. Each phase will be described in detail.

Vocational Evaluation

Prior to the development of occupational training and awareness programs, the vocational educator and teacher of the handicapped must try to identify what types of occupations this particular special education student might consider in making his/her career choice. Not only should the student's occupational ability be evaluated but in order to provide for comprehensive assessment, academic and personal social skills must be considered, such as reading, writing, counting, assembly and disassembly, recognizing basic hand tools, ability to get along with others, and cleanliness.

This evaluation is not a one time occurrence but must be a continuing process at all levels of the program, from teacher to teacher, from level to level. For the handicapped person, a student profile should accompany him throughout his vocational education process.

Under certain conditions, and where possible, one of the best means of observing and evaluating the student is in a formally controlled vocational experience. Such experience will consist of one occupational area or many experiences containing many of the articles and tools he/she would find in a more sophisticated vocational area. After a period of time in this orientation area, the vocational teacher together with the special education instructor should develop a more realistic assessment of the handicapped person.

Self and Career Awareness

Career awareness is the next step in the sequential career development of the handicapped person. The career awareness phase should take place in the middle school years or as early as possible thereafter. Studies nave shown that career decisions made during the middle school years will have a lasting affect on an individual's life-long career selection. This is especially significant for the handicapped. Because of his/her learning disability, the occupational fields available to him/her will probably be drastically reduced.

This awareness phase should offer the students the opportunity to become acquainted with a variety of occupations at *his/her* level of ability. He/she must become aware also of his/her rights and responsibilities as a citizen.

In this introduction to various careers, all resources should be utilized. In the community the students should tour places of potential employment regularly. Exposure to various areas such as industry, business, institutions, and government agencies can provide the handicapped with a firsthand look at the world of work. People of various walks of life can come into the classroom and discuss with the students positions available to them. This will allow the student a chance to view himself against the potential job market. To know one's self is an area of primary concern in this phase.

Flexibility and variety are important in planning and operating a career exploration program. There is no one best way to develop a program in this area, but a self-awareness and occupational awareness will assist the handicapped person to establish some realistic career goals.

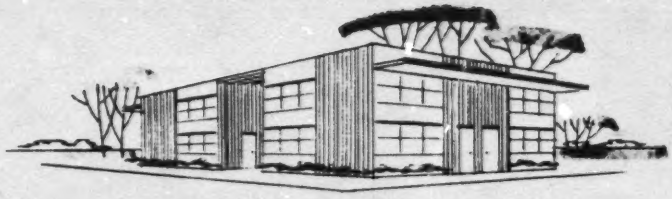
Skill Training

Program services which provide skill training, accompanied by intensive and continued pre-vocational evaluation, have been very successful in many schools in New Jersey.

Developing basic work skills through paid work experience in simulated factory settings has proven to be very successful. A series of job-try-outs, such as cooperative or work study programs, will provide further evaluation and employability training.

The following are some guidelines for the vocational educator as he trains the handicapped youth for employment:

1. Provide the academic teachers with information about the academic needs as they relate to a specific vocational training area.
2. Train at a level of competency which matches the student's capabilities.
3. Train in an area where the student can master a skill which is saleable.
4. Where possible, combine training in the school with on-the-job training. (CIE – *C*ooperative *I*ndustrial *E*ducation; WECEP – *W*ork *E*xperience *C*areer *E*xploration *P*rogram; or Work Study.)



Getting Started in a Real Job

Throughout the training sequence, job placement in the community should be provided. The student is being prepared to take a job which is consistent with the training received, with his personal interests, and with an opportunity for advancement. If the placement coordinator is involved in the total sequence of the program, the student's needs and potentials will be familiar to him when the time for job placement arrives.

Many resources are available to aid in finding the handicapped student a job appropriate to his abilities. For example, the Rehabilitation Commission has resources available to educators and students seeking assistance. In most states, the State Employment Agency has at least one person charged with the responsibility of arranging job placements for the handicapped.

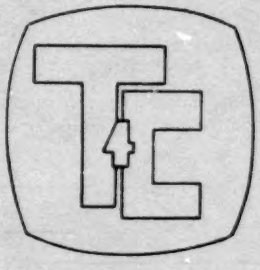
Follow-Up

One of the best means of determining how well a vocational program is serving the handicapped students is to assess it through a follow-up of graduates or placements from the program. If the goal of the vocational educator is job entry employment, the vocational educator or placement counselor will want to see how consistent or applicable this training is for the handicapped student.

The feedback from the follow-up could be used to make modifications and alterations in the program, or point out a need of further training in a specific area. This follow-up by the coordinator will also be important if the handicapped person is still finding it difficult adjusting from an educational setting to a work setting.

6. PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction's Branch of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services and the Division of Vocational Education's Bureau of Special Needs and Cooperative Education have developed a preferred sequence of vocational and occupational training programs for students classified as handicapped in New Jersey. These programs include:



TYPES OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED IN NEW JERSEY

	TYPES OF SCHOOLS			
	Elem. School	Middle School	Comp. H.S.	Area Voc. H.S.
A. Technology For Children. . .K-6	X			
B. Introduction to Vocations	X	X	X	X
C. Employment Orientation	X	X	X	X
D. Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (14 and 15 years old)	X	X	X	X
E. Part-Time Cooperative Employment Orientation (16 years of age and older)	X	X	X	X

Technology for Children(T4CP): Technology for Children is a multi-media, multi-sensory, hands-on approach to education through the introduction of modern technologies into the existing curriculum.

Principally, T4CP will enrich the disciplines—Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. It will also focus on new, emerging, and present technologies to include the world of work concepts in addition to better understanding of the vast range of jobs available in professional fields, service, non-professional and individual pursuits.

Introduction to Vocations (IV): Programs designed as an integral part of the students, overall education and school guidance program. It is a vocational guidance program to help students gain occupational awareness and to give students a better foundation for later career and educational choices. The children are cycled into six areas: Know yourself, Home Economics, Health, Industrial Arts, Business Education and Science. Additional important parts of the program are: "hands-on" activities and trips to business and industry.

Employment Orientation: An in-school, hands-on, vocational program which involves two phases of development. The first phase called "simulated work" exposes the student to simulated work tasks to help him develop sound work habits and attitudes, and to relate satisfactorily to his peers and supervisors. The "Basic Skill Training Phase" provides the individual student with basic skills in the occupational areas for which he has shown interest and aptitude.

W.E.C.E.P.: The Work Experience and Career Exploration Program: A cooperative program for 14-15 year old disadvantaged, handicapped and school alienated youth. Students must be 14 or 15 years of age at the beginning of the school year. If a student turns 16 during the school year, he or she can continue in W.E.C.E.P. until the term ends.

The objectives of this program are:

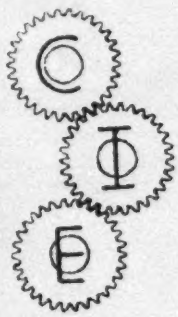
(1) Help school alienated or disoriented youth see purpose and value in education.
(2) Motivate these students to attend school regularly.
(3) Show potential drop-outs that school provides opportunities to further their development and is responsive to their needs.
(4) Develop self-confidence, a feeling of worth, through a paid work-experience in the adult work world.

This program can be in any of the four areas of Cooperative Education: Cooperative Industrial Education, Distributive Education, Office Occupations, Home Economics.

Students will work a maximum of three hours per day on school days plus eight hours on Saturday for a total of 23 hours per week. They may not work after 6 p.m. and can not work in hazardous occupations or manufacturing. They will attend the 200 minute per week related class.

The Child Labor regulation that is relaxed for this program is that a 14-15 year old—may work in private employment during school hours provided the school supervises the student on the job.

The class size must be at least 12 but not more than 25. All cooperative program rules will be followed.



Part-Time Cooperative Employment Orientation: This program represents a cooperative effort between school and industry. It offers Special Needs students who are 16 years or older an opportunity for part-time on-the-job work experience and provides an environment for meeting an educational need which cannot be met within the school plant. In a relatively sheltered and closely supervised work station, students can be instructed, observed, and have frequent evaluation of their progress.

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